

# **FRIENDS MISSION**

IN

# **CUBA**

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BY

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ISSUED BY

**AMERICAN FRIENDS BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS  
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**1912**



## THE STORY OF FRIENDS IN CUBA

### Preliminary Steps

Late in the year 1897, while returning from a visit to Friends' missions in Jamaica, Zenas L. Martin was sitting on the deck of one of the United Fruit Company's banana steamers in company with Capt. L. D. Baker while they passed in sight of the east coast of Cuba. Capt. Baker remarked that the company he represented was expecting to purchase and develop property in Cuba after the insurrection that was then going on, and he wished Friends to follow with their missions. Later the issues of the Spanish-American war directed the attention of Friends generally in common with other denominations of America, to the religious and moral destitution in Cuba.

As early as 1898, a few weeks after the cessation of hostilities between Spain and the United States, Iowa Yearly Meeting authorized its mission board to solicit the co-operation of other yearly meetings with a view to entering the field. All of the yearly meetings communicated with, except one from which no reply was received, expressed deep interest in and sympathy for the proposed work. In the spring of 1899, Capt. Baker further opened the way by offering \$1,000 to aid in starting the mission. This amount he increased later. The subject was a matter of general concern among Friends in 1898 and 1899.

In November of the latter year Benjamin F. Trueblood made a visit to Cuba to investigate conditions. He was impressed with the opening for Friends there and did much with voice and pen to stimulate interest. About this time John B. Wood began preparations for starting a mission near Havana. The feeling, however, as expressed generally, was that the work of Friends should be administered by the American Friends' Board of Foreign Missions. This



board at a meeting held the 4th and 5th of February, 1900, by the authority and instructions of seven yearly meetings took definite steps toward opening a Friends' mission in Cuba.

At this time the appointment of missionaries was considered and Zenas L. Martin, as Agent and Superintendent for the Board, was directed to visit Cuba with a view to locating the mission. In pursuance of his appointment, he visited Cuba in April, 1900. His first stop was in Havana, where he investigated conditions, and then went to Gibara, on the north coast of the eastern part of the island. He also visited the adjacent towns of Holguin and Banes. His report having been accepted by the Board, the first missionaries sailed from New York, November 3, 1900, and landed at Gibara eleven days later, where a building was rented and the work at once inaugurated.

### **The Field**

The field of Friends in Eastern Cuba is a territory approximately 100 miles long and 50 miles wide and includes all the municipalities of Gibara and Banes and the greater part of those of Holguin and Puerto Padre. The census of 1907 gives the population as follows: Gibara (Banes has since been separated from Gibara), 39,343; Holguin, 50,224; Puerto Padre, 34,061. These figures include a large rural population and about 50 towns and villages. The last decade has seen a rapid increase in population. The rate of increase for the eight years preceding the last census was 46 per cent. About 40,000 of the total inhabitants are children of school age, less than one-fourth of whom are in school.

The principal products are agricultural, though some gold is mined near Holguin. During the first nine months of 1910 5,304,000 plantains were shipped from Gibara. Tropical fruits, vegetables and corn are raised. The leading product is sugar. There are four large sugar mills in this

district, two of which are among the largest in the world. The cane harvest of 1910 resulted in the production by these mills of more than 1,255,000 bags of sugar of 325 pounds each. Ground is broken for a fifth mill of still larger proportions, the estimated cost of which, with its accessories, is \$5,000,000.

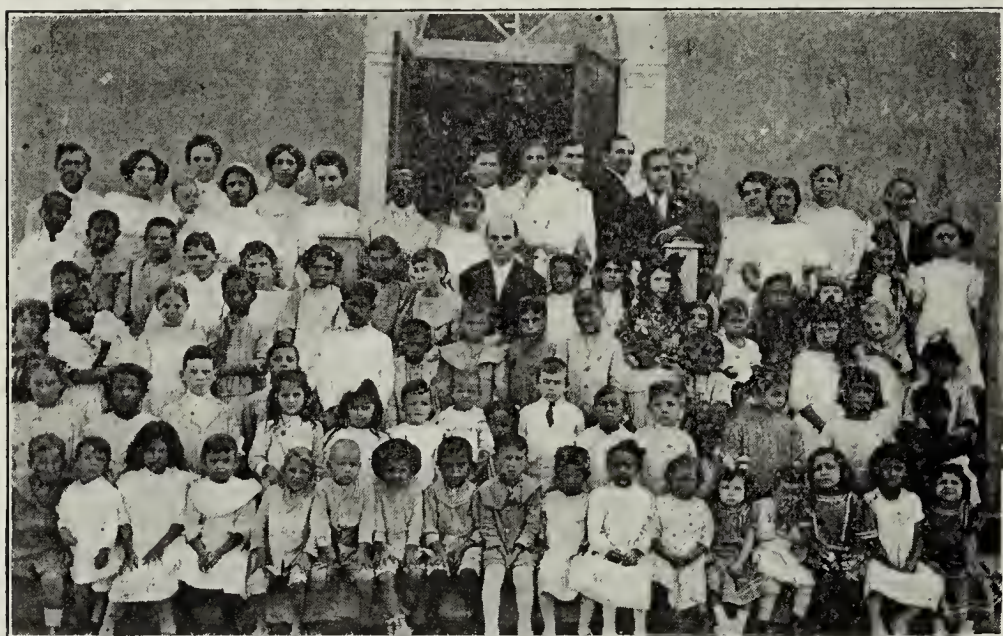
The inhabitants have the same characteristics as those of the rest of the island, except that near Banes are about 600 natives of Jamaica who are ministered to by the Friends' missionaries. When the Friends' mission was opened, the only way of access to the district was by steamer to Gibara or across the island on horseback. Now a network of railways gives access to all of the principal towns of the field as well as connects with the Cuban Central railroad and all parts of the island. This makes it possible for workers to make frequent visits to towns which five years ago were seldom or never visited.

### **The Gibara Station**

The first missionaries sent out by the Board to open work in Cuba were Emma Phillips, Sylvester Jones and wife, May M. Jones and Maria S. Trevino. The place chosen was Gibara. This town is beautifully located upon a point of land. On one side the ocean waves are in ceaseless battle with the coral decked rocks, on the other is the quiet harbor, far out into which is thrust a substantial wharf which becomes a hive of workingmen as soon as a vessel anchors at the pier. Back of the town is an imposing hill, on the highest part of which the Cuban flag waves over the local headquarters of the rural guards. From here there is a most enchanting view. One looks down upon the red tile of the houses or along the coast where the "shacks" of the poorer people seem to hug each other as if afraid of the great Atlantic as it washes their door-yards. The harbor bears upon its bosom a fleet of sailing craft. The whitewashed homes of the village on the other

side are plainly seen. Beyond are the green cane fields and farther still rises the smoke of the Sta. Lucia sugar mill. The panorama is fitly framed by the rugged hills of the distant background.

When the mission was opened at Gibara the people were entirely destitute of religious teaching. There was but one Catholic priest to a population of more than 30,000. His ministrations were confined to collecting fees for baptisms,



One of the Four Divisions of Gibara Sunday School  
The divisions are about equal in size

marriage ceremonies and mass. There was no open Bible, no preaching, no Sunday school. The most aggressive religious teaching was that done by the spiritualist.

From the beginning the Gibara work has been in good repute with the people of the town. The various lines of work taken up have grown steadily. A record of the first Sunday spent by the missionaries in Gibara has this item, "Held Sunday school and organized permanently." The last word must have been used prophetically, for that day

only the missionaries were present. Today there are six Sunday schools under the care of the Gibara church and only lack of workers and means prevents a much greater work being done for the religious education of the hundreds of children whose religious instruction has been wholly neglected. One of the Sunday schools is carried on alone by a young woman who has just graduated from the mission school.

The Christian Endeavor Society occupies an important place in the work among young people. Its Tuesday night gatherings are times of both spiritual and educational opportunities. Higher ideals in social relations are inculcated. A growing circulating library is in charge of this society. A young men's debating club has been organized.

The day school was opened January 3, 1901, with three pupils. The good work of the school soon brought others and it continued without interruption as a most helpful department of the mission work. In 1909-10 there were forty-three pupils enrolled. The present school house, an old frame dwelling house that was somewhat remodeled a few years ago, is inadequate and without sufficient equipment. The lot upon which the buildings at Gibara are located is a little more than one hundred feet square and is about two blocks from sea. The mission home was erected in 1901 and is a comfortable and healthful home for the missionaries. The church is a nice stone building. This was the first church erected by Friends in Cuba. It was inaugurated June 15, 1902. In these buildings center the many activities of Friends in Gibara.

### **The Holguin Station**

Holguin is a historic city. Founded only fifteen years later than Philadelphia, Pa., it has played an important part in the political history of Eastern Cuba. It has produced some of the ablest leaders in the insurrections, among whom was General Calixto Garcia. Its part in the wars for inde-



pendence gives it considerable political influence at the present time.

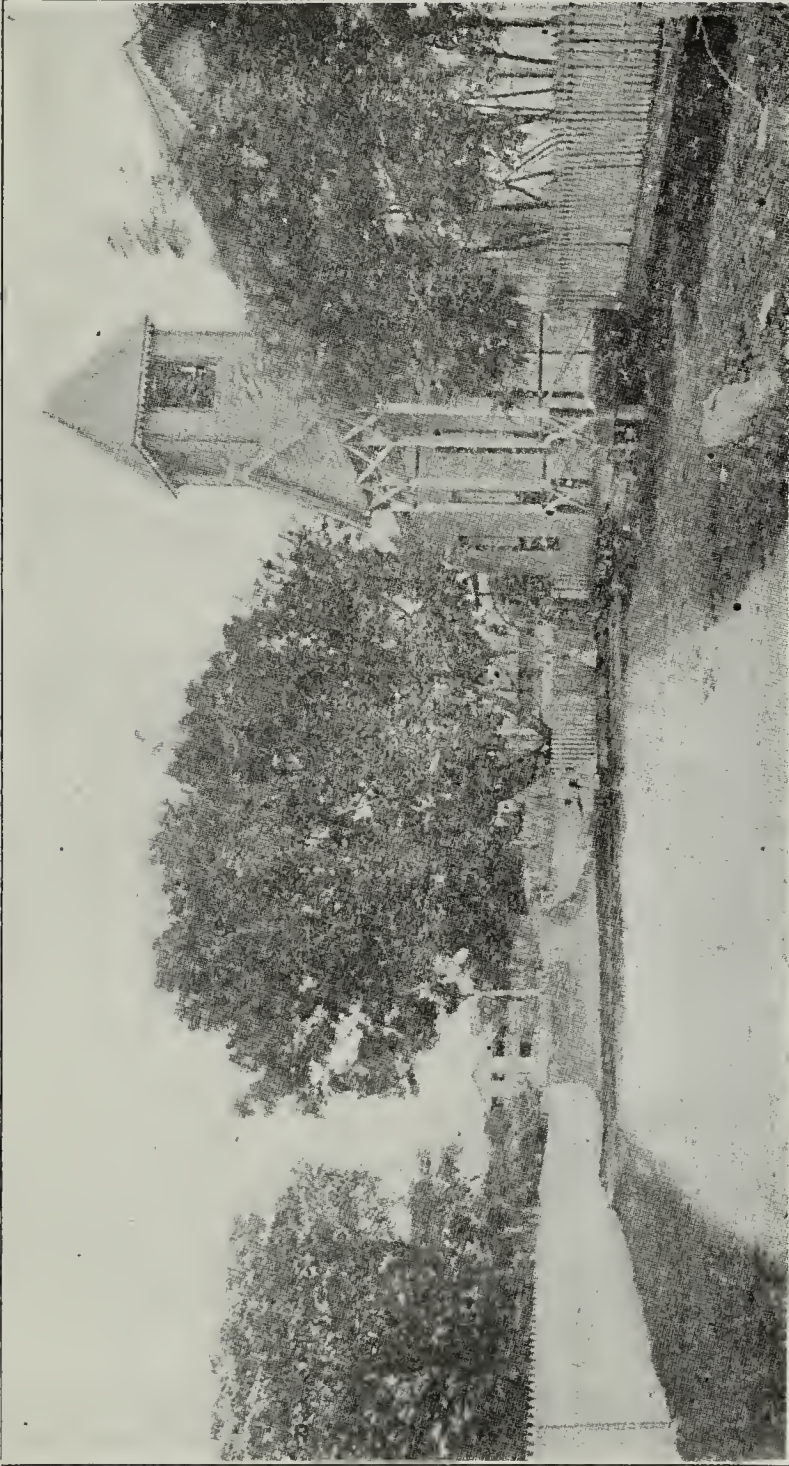
The location is admirable. It is healthful, the water supply is abundant, the character of the soil and drainage prevents the principal streets from becoming muddy in the rainy season. The Cuban Company railroad and the Gibara and Holguin railroad give direct connections with the leading points in the interior and seaboard. The inhabitants pride themselves on their culture. There are two Catholic churches, but there is but one priest for the entire city and a large rural population. During both interventions, Holguin was made a military post by the American army.

The first sermon by a Friends missionary in Holguin was preached at a meeting of soldiers and other Americans held in October, 1901. The first work among the Spanish speaking population was begun in a rented building on June 6, 1902. A report, written at the time, of the first meeting held in the rented quarters, says: "Considering the rainy evening I did not hope for a very large attendance. However, we had over one hundred interested and orderly listeners, over half of them, I think, were men over twenty-five years of age." On the 14th of the following month Charles C. Haworth and wife, Orpha R. Haworth, arrived and entered upon the work.

The meeting house and mission home are substantial buildings made of concrete blocks. The former is finished in native cedar and fronts on a park. It was inaugurated the 24th of June, 1903. Two rooms in the church, designed as school rooms, also added to the facilities for Sunday school and Christian Endeavor work. The meeting room is seated with chairs.

The day school is sought by the best families of the city as the place where they can find the highest educational advantages for their children. In spite of unavoidable changes in the teachers, the school has well maintained its standing. It is true that some pupils after leaving school





Meeting House, Banes, Cuba

fail to make permanent their personal interest in the church, but even so they always have a deep respect for it, and the school undoubtedly enlarges the sphere of influence of the church as well as makes the standard of living higher.

The work at Holguin has progressed along the conventional lines of gospel meetings, Sunday schools, Christian Endeavor, Bible classes, etc. Under the stress of changes in pastoral supervision, the members have shown a fidelity to the church which ought to put to shame many older Christians. One member, who after joining moved some thirty miles into the country, comes punctually to each monthly meeting, bringing a dollar to pay his subscription toward the support of the church. He recently made the monthly meeting a gift of a neat little chapel in a needy part of the city. Another member rides twelve miles every Sunday to attend meeting.

A meeting in English is held once each month for the American and Canadian colonists. The missionaries are thus enabled to minister to those of their own racial family who are exposed to the moral dangers peculiar to those living among a people of lower ideals.

### **The Banes Station**

Friends were first drawn to Banes through the influence of Capt. L. D. Baker, who was acquainted with Friends in Jamaica and was desirous that they establish a mission on the estate of the United Fruit Company in Cuba. The Fruit Company gave the site for the mission.

The growing and making into sugar of 25,000 acres of cane is the life of Banes. A day's ride through the clean and thrifty cane fields in company with the chief of the agricultural department and later a view of the sugar making, accompanied by the explanations of the manager of the mill, showed the writer how carefully planned and wrought out is every detail connected with the great enterprise, and all with a view to having the largest possible sum

on the profit side of the ledger at the close of the cane harvest. As a missionary remarked, "Anything that doesn't relate to sugar making doesn't have much chance in Banés." There is no Sunday and far too little wholesome social life and culture influences. Educational advantages are extremely limited and religion is treated with indifference. Few realize the extent to which manhood is taxed for the sake of making the largest amount of sugar at the lowest possible cost.

Upon a choice location near the center of this great hive of industry, is located the Friends' mission, where different missionaries have labored to promote the things which make for righteousness and godliness. Of the four mission stations, Banés is the only one at which the church and mission home were built before the missionary work was begun and the only one at which a school was not immediately established. Raymond S. Holding and Minnie L. Cook were married at Gibara on February 9, 1903, and soon after established their home at Banés. The mission was formally opened the 29th of the following March, with public services in the church. Two years later a monthly meeting was organized. An addition was built on the church which for several years was used for the school room.

A gift of money from the United Fruit Company has made possible a new school house. The first term in the new building opened very auspiciously September 11, 1911. The workers feel that the school is a great opportunity for doing good. Most of the children come from the better class employees of the United Fruit Company and live near the mission. The majority of them are also members of and attenders at Sunday school. There are also several pupils from the better families in the native town and thus a door is opened into their homes.

Some striking conversions marked the beginning of the work, but changes in the missionaries caused by sickness, etc., left them without the proper nurturing care so that



permanent results were but few where there had been hope of a large harvest. Undaunted by these discouragements, the present missionaries have wrought faithfully in laying an enduring foundation upon which a great work can be built.

A small Sunday school building has been erected to meet the needs of a Sunday school in one of the most neglected quarters of the town. It has served its purpose well and has been suggested as a model for Sunday school houses needed in other places.

The large number of Jamaicans on the estate makes an English service necessary. An English department in the Sunday school is well attended and recently a Society of Christian Endeavor was organized and is a helpful auxiliary in the English work. A Christian Endeavor has also been organized in connection with the Spanish work.

### **The Puerto Padre Station**

The growing interest and sympathy of the membership of Wilmington Yearly Meeting for the work in Cuba caused its Foreign Mission Board to propose to the yearly meeting in 1902 the support of a station in Cuba. The yearly meeting having approved of the proposition, Edgar H. Stranahan was sent to Cuba in January, 1903, to examine the field and help locate the station. After investigation and conference with the missionaries already there, the town of Puerto Padre was recommended as the location for the new station. It is a growing town with a fine harbor. New railroads and industrial enterprises surround it with facilities for growth in population as well as opportunities for reaching the inhabitants with the gospel.

Emma Phillips, who had been in charge of the school at Gibara, was selected as the first missionary. In October, 1903, she was married to Juan Francisco Martinez and on the 17th, five days later, they landed in Puerto Padre. The line of work emphasized has been the day school. The suc-

cess of other stations in their school work has been repeated here and even augmented. A neat and commodious school house and a mission home were soon erected. A stone church edifice has just been completed.

For a number of years there was no resident minister at this place, but public religious service has not been neglected. The new church building is giving fresh impulse to this line of effort. From the first, the Sunday school and



Puerto Padre Day School

Christian Endeavor have had an important place. Faithful sowing in this fertile soil gives promise of a large harvest. Earnest workers, increased equipment and widening opportunities foretell a splendid future for this work.

### Out Stations

**Auras** is on the Gibara and Holguin railroad nearly midway between the two places. A neat chapel was recently

built here at a cost, including the lot, of a little more than \$600, about half of which was raised on the field. There are several candidates as a nucleus with which to form a permanent organization. In **Bocas** the messages of the missionaries are well received. Most of the families of the town attend the meetings with more or less regularity. A children's meeting, held Wednesday afternoon every two weeks, does the work of a Sunday school for the children. **Velasco** is a growing town. It is in the midst of a most fertile agricultural country. As in the two preceding towns, meetings are held here every two weeks by a native worker, partially helped by the mission. **San Juan de Chaparra** is a town on the estate of the Chaparra Sugar Company. **Santa Lucia** is the location of a sugar mill which gives employment to over four thousand men. Direct railroad connection with other towns is just being completed, making this important point of easy access. The managers have shown themselves friendly to mission work. Friends already have a number of adherents who have gone from other places to work in the sugar mill. Funds are greatly needed for extending the work at this place. The railroad leading from Santa Lucia passes through a number of villages. One of these, **Portrillo**, was the first out station established by Friends. The neighbors there frequently ask why ministers do not visit them more often. **Los Angeles** was the first out station of the Banes field. A small house is loaned to the mission free of rent. **Veguitas** is easily accessible from Banes and the neighbors show themselves interested in religious work. In addition to the above there are about forty towns and villages in the field which Friends are endeavoring to occupy. In many of them some work has been done, but in order to give the Bread of Life to this growing population a large increase of means must be made.



## The Missionaries

Zenas L. Martin (minister) and Susie J. Martin are from Iowa Yearly Meeting. The former served for a number of years as agent and superintendent for the Board. They are now located at the Holguin Station. Emma Phillips was for seven years a missionary in Mexico. She began work in Cuba at Gibara. In October, 1903, she married Juan Francisco Martinez and moved to Puerto Padre. She is a member of Indiana Yearly Meeting. Sylvester Jones (minister) and May M. Jones, from Iowa Yearly Meeting, have been at the Gibara Station from the beginning, with the exception of two years spent in better preparation for the work. Raymond S. Holding (minister) spent a year in language study at Gibara. He was a member of Western Yearly Meeting. After his marriage to Minnie L. Cook, of Kansas Yearly Meeting, they were at Banos until near the time when they were transferred to Mexico. Charles C. Haworth (minister) and Orpha R. Haworth, of Nebraska Yearly Meeting, were located at Holguin until September, 1906, after which they spent about nine months at Gibara during the absence of Sylvester Jones and wife. After a furlough in the United States and a few months in Mexico they returned to their present field and have been at Banos since November, 1908. Clotilde L. Pretlow, M. D., of Indiana Yearly Meeting, has been in charge of the Gibara school since 1903. Edith Terrell, of Wilmington Yearly Meeting, entered the work at Puerto Padre early in 1904, and returned home in March, 1910. Mary L. Ellis, of Iowa Yearly Meeting, was located at Holguin. Failing health and the amputation of a limb necessitated her return to the north early in 1908. Joseph M. Purdie and wife, Una M. Purdie, of North Carolina Yearly Meeting, were at the station for about sixteen months, beginning in September, 1906. Jennie E. Joyce, of Nebraska Yearly Meeting, began her missionary work in Cuba in 1906, and has done service

both at Holguin and Banes. Henry D. Cox, of Kansas Yearly Meeting, arrived in Cuba July 4, 1910, and took up the study of Spanish at Holguin. In August, 1911, he was located at Puerto Padre. Bertha O. Lawrence, of Indiana Yearly Meeting, reached Cuba October 10, 1911. After spending nine months in language study at Gibara she took charge of the higher room of the Banes school. Ina Ratliff, of Indiana Yearly Meeting, arrived on the field six weeks later and spent the first few months at Puerto Padre. She took charge of the school at Holguin the following year. Clarence G. McClean (minister) and Bertrell S. McClean, of Iowa Yearly Meeting, landed in Cuba February 29, 1912, and at once occupied the mission home at Holguin. In company with them Alma R. Welch came and she and Henry D. Cox were married March 2, 1912.

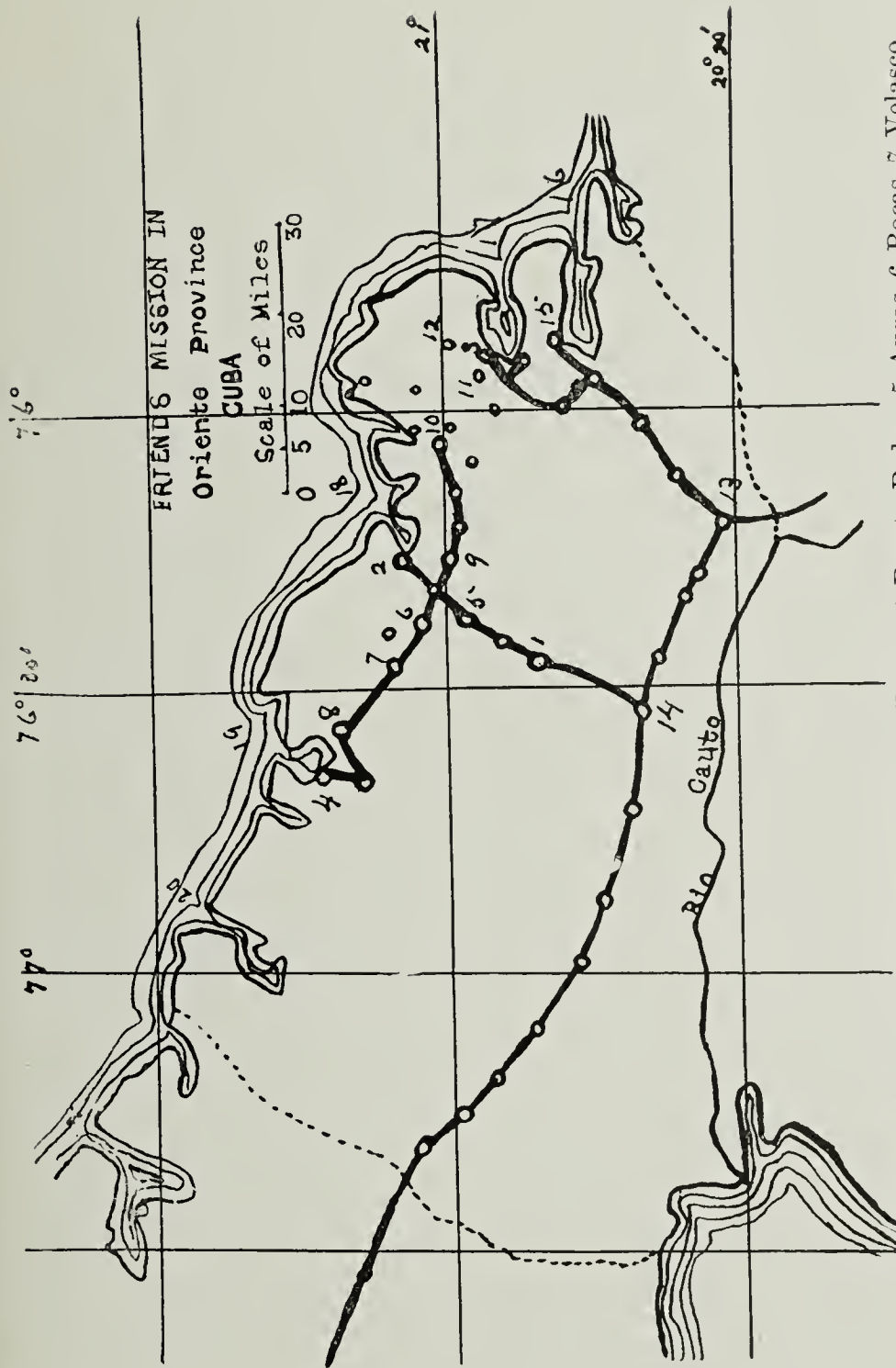
Two natives of Mexico have helped in the work of American Friends in Cuba, viz., Maria S. Trevino and Juan Francisco Martinez. The former was engaged as a teacher in Friends schools for several years.

The list of native workers is too long for a place here. If mention were to be made only of those who have been engaged under the direction of the mission, injustice would be done the large number of faithful ones whose labors have been none the less earnest because given without recompense.

### **The Work**

Since the beginning it has been the policy of the mission to build up a strong evangelistic work at each of the central stations. This is being done by means of regular meetings, Bible classes, Sunday schools, family visiting, young people's societies, study classes, books and tracts, etc. As a result of these lines of work, groups of believers at each of the station are being taught to work together in the Christian spirit without the use of sectarian formulas.

As might be expected these groups find opportunity for



**Places on Map:**—1 Holguin, 2 Gibara, 3 Banes, 4 Puerto Padre, 5 Auras, 6 Bocas, 7 Velasco, 8 San Juan De Chaparra, 9 Yabazon, 10 Santa Lucia, 11 Veguitas, 12 Los Angeles, 13 Alto Cedro, 14 Cacocum, 15 Antilla, 16 Port of Nice, 17 Port of Banes, 18 Port of Gibara, 19 Port of Puerto Padre, 20 Port of Manati, 21 Port of Nuevitas.



self-expression in various forms of social activity. At one place a group of young men hold weekly meetings to discuss social and religious problems. These discussions have elicited the interest of prominent men of the town. A Christian Endeavor Society has taken up the propaganda for the prevention and cure of tuberculosis. They find this subject closely relates itself to better housing conditions which is deplorably bad and seemingly unnecessary in towns of only a few thousand inhabitants.

The missionaries realize that the pathway to the highest development of the Cuban people must lead them through the school room. Not one-half of the children of school age are in school even in the towns and a considerable part of the rural population is entirely without educational opportunities. Added to the above difficulty is the inferior character of the instruction given. There are no normal schools where teachers can prepare themselves for their work. A large part of them have never had educational opportunities above the fourth or fifth grade. In fact, the public school work is almost wholly confined to the lower grades. In December, 1906, there were in the public schools of Cuba 122,213 pupils. Of these only 587 were in the fifth grade and none in the sixth grade. The educational work of the Friends mission is so far as it has been developed, is very successful. More than a thousand young people have, for a longer or shorter time, been under Protestant ideals as pupils in the four day schools of Friends.

While recognizing the indispensable place occupied by the day schools, the missionaries realize that their existence only makes the need of higher educational opportunities that much more imperative. They are promoting the thirst for useful knowledge, the next step is to supply the means for acquiring it. The ideal is to supply educational opportunities, that shall be adequate and thorough, to those who in the natural course of things must assume the leadership of the native church in its struggle to be self-supporting and

self-propagating, that they may be men and women who can intelligently grapple with the complex problems of an infant church.

Some special lines of work have been taken up such as visits to hospitals and jails with gospel meetings in the latter, efforts to relieve distress caused by ignorance and disease, colportage and Bible work and itinerating. This latter offers very great opportunities. The plan usually followed in this work is to arrive at a village early in the morning. It is a matter of a few minutes to arrange for a room in which to hold a meeting at night. It is frequently a dance hall and is given free of charge. Then the day is used in visiting families. The open-hearted, informal hospitality of the people makes it possible to bring a moment of good cheer and perhaps a word of counsel to many homes in a single day. The meeting at night by the light of lanterns and smoky lamps rarely fails to draw a crowd. The women sit on benches improvised of rough boards, while the men stand and the children wedge themselves into the place nearest the preacher. On the trip made between Sundays by two missionary pastors accompanied by a young Cuban, meetings were held in five villages on successive days with an average attendance of nearly two hundred and more than three hundred and fifty calls at homes.

Cottage meetings in the homes of members, gatherings of a social and literary character, excursions to attend plantation meetings, participation in the activities of local organizations and the work of the Annual Conference of the native church, all contribute in a very definite way toward welding into a compact social group those of like faith and hope.

### **An Estimate**

Few missionary movements of enduring quality can lay claim to large visible results during the first ten years of existence. The first fruits, though they may not be large,

are nevertheless peculiarly significant. Not least among the assets of Friends in Cuba is the knowledge gained of conditions and possibilities there. New workers have successfully adjusted themselves to new conditions. There has been the serious study of the needs and possibilities of a people whose heritage of language, temperament and customs is foreign to the missionaries who have gone among them. There has been the testing and determining of the elements of weakness and strength in the institutions already existing. There is the intimate knowledge of what the Roman church has done and what she has failed to do, what Spanish domination and American intervention have done and what they have failed to do, what has been the result of national independence upon the moral and spiritual life of the people, what influences are tugging them upward and what grovelling downward pull is holding them to the weak and beggarly elements, what thoughts they think, what lives they live and what hopes they cherish. There has been a careful casting about for the best methods and procedures for carrying on a work that will give both adequate and permanent results. This characterizes the first years of Friends in Cuba.

### A Forward Look

Patient, prayerful effort both at home and on the field has resulted in a preparation for wise enlargement and stable progress. A more hasty movement might have plunged the church into expensive experiments. Upon the carefully laid foundations of the first years there now rises the clearly marked outlines of the superstructure. This framework, upon which must be placed the expanding efforts of coming years, can best be set forth in the following general policy:

1. That we recognize our obligation to minister to the 100,000 souls in our field, who without the ministrations of



Friends are left almost wholly to grope in spiritual blindness.

2. That we must put forth all possible effort to establish self-supporting and self-propagating societies and churches.

3. That the present schools under the direction of the church be given better equipment and opportunity for higher education be given, because such education must have a large part in quickening the life of the people and in enabling them to successfully take the steps indicated in the preceding paragraph.

4. That we must by practical effort as well as by precept teach the importance of earnest effort toward social amelioration so urgently demanded by conditions on this field.

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## FRIENDS' MISSION, HAVANA PROVINCE

Prepared by Arthur E. L. Pain

Was organized 3d month, 1900, by John B. Wood, Arthur W. Dowe and A. Ellen Woody. The gospel has been preached in the following places: Aguacate, Bainoa, Jaruco, San Antonio, Madruga, Canaballo, Zuines, St. Cruz del Norte, Campo, Florida, Jibacoa, Boca de Jaruco, Empalme, Robles. Open air meeting in Havana. Services held in the prisons of Havana, Matanzas and Jaruco, also in hospital in Jaruco.

Trinidad was worked for three months. Every year for the last ten years, more than one hundred Bibles and Testaments have been sold or given away and 3,000 tracts more or less have been given out. For one year the trains, passing Jaruco station twice a day, had from two hundred to three hundred tracts distributed printed on the mission press.

In another year, for three months, the press was worked by one of the converts more than three thousand tracts made and given out. Three hundred Moody's "Way to God" sold and given away. We have a free library of Spanish books for the use of the public.

The mission has been blessed in work with destitute tramps. Seaman having lost their ships have been taken in, given food and clothes, and helped in fare on railroad. Lost sons have been found to enquiring parents. Through the giving of lessons many Cuban young people have now the knowledge of English. Each year protracted meetings have been held and souls professed conversion, regular weekly and First day meetings have been held and First day school on First day. Plantation meetings on the farms from time to time. More than 500 miles rode by horse in each year, besides travel on train and foot to preach in the stations. House to house visiting. Hospital visited daily for four years in Jaruco. Monthly meetings set up in Madruga and Jaruco. In this at least three hundred converts have professed publicly, but at present many are scattered some in Havana and Matanzas and other parts, others have gone to other denominations. We thank God for the blessings in all this time, not only to ourselves but to many from whom we hear from time to time. At present this field is occupied by three workers, Martha L. Woody, Arthur Pain and Ellen Woody Pain. For four years only the last named worked in this field.





